

Last Day of Summer Camp

Ten calls are coming through on my cell phone at once. I try to answer them in order. Finally I get to my mom. “Just wanted to see how you are,” she says. “Oh, by the way, Alexis called the cops.” I try to treat this as nonchalantly as she is, but mean while I’m running to find my pants. I don my gray hoodie, grab my keys, lock the door behind me, and run out into the street, finally saying goodbye. I just make it — I see the cops coming in front of my door as I make it to the next block.

I know exactly what to do in these kinds of situations; I’ve seen it in all the movies. Turn off the wireless on the cell phone, pay for everything in cash, don’t use RFID cards, stick to sidestreets. I stick to sidestreets, but I still hear the cop sirens buzzing down all the major roads. There are major roads on every side of me.

The lady across the aisle from me on the plane is pleading with the flight attendant. She holds her small dog between her legs (“oh, don’t worry,” she had explained, “he’ll stop barking once we take off”), covered in only a blanket. The attendant is down on his knees, trying to understand what she wants. He disappears and later I see the woman pouring a small bottle of alcohol into her drink.

Apparently this was a mistake. The woman starts screaming profanity, locking herself in the bathroom, running up and down the aisles. Finally, she’s forcibly restrained. The pilot comes on loud over the intercom, thanks us for our patience, explains that you’re not supposed to mix alcohol with certain psychoactive medications, tells us law enforcement will be meeting us at the gate.

Law enforcement meets us at the gate. “Please remain in your seats,” comes the pilot’s voice. “Law enforcement has taken control of the air craft. No one is permitted to move until law enforcement releases its control of the air craft.” Law enforcement relinquishes the air craft and as I exit I see the woman, with a couple policeman in front of her, asking her if she can see the fingers they’re holding up.

“God,” I think. “Didn’t I just go through this yesterday?”

I forgot how much I hate San Francisco. The bus takes an hour to arrive, while I have to stand in the human filth of the city. For some reason they put the major bus transfer point at the same place drug dealers congregate. It’s not a very fun place to wait.

I finally get home and tumble into the mat that makes up my bed.

Next thing I remember I’m in the Moscone Center. MacWorld is over, but a few signs and people are still around. I look out a window for a bit and a guy taps me on the shoulder. “I think they’re trying to punk Paul Graham in that room,” he says, pointing. I go and see.

Paul Graham is indeed in that room, as is his girlfriend and my co-founders and the other Y Combinators I know and a bunch of people I don’t recognize (probably this year’s batch of Y Combinators). They start surrounding me. I begin to suspect a trap.

“What’s going on here?” I ask Steve. “Wait a second, you brought me here, didn’t you?” “What are you talking about?” Steve replies. “I mean, I remember going to sleep, I remember kind of wanting to wake up, but then all of the sudden I’m in the Moscone Center? How did I get here? You must have brought me here, didn’t you?”

Steve denies all knowledge, but there’s a gleam in his eye.

The people surrounding me take a step closer.

“Alright,” I say. “I’ll make a deal. If I can tickle every last one of you, I go free. Otherwise, you win.”

They seem to accept the deal.

I begin tickling.

People begin running, dodging, flying around the room. But I’m like a heat-seeking missile. I track down every one of them, extend my hands out, go straight for their armpits.

I win.

I wake up on my mat. The sun is shining brightly. It’s a beautiful day. I whistle a happy tune. I go to wait for the bus. One bus goes by, it’s too full to stop. Another comes by after what seems like an eternity. It’s almost as full, but I’m not going to wait for yet another. I hang from the bar overhead, just barely fitting inside. There’s no room for my feet.

The bus gets off a couple blocks from my office. To get there, I have to walk past the Moscone Center. That’s when it comes back to me. I look hard at the Moscone Center. “Oh,” I say. “It must have been a dream.”

“Gooooood Monday morning,” I say, entering my office. That’s kind of my little thing, my little ritual. “Gooooood XXX morning,” I say in a happy voice, replacing the XXX with the name of the day I’m saying it on. I only say it once each day.

My co-worker is ignoring me.

I am presented with a letter accepting my resignation. I am told to collect my “personal effects”. A woman from HR politely escorts me from the premises. She never says that she is escorting me, but she does stand behind me wherever I go. I think I am supposed to leave.

I leave. The sun is shining brightly. It’s a beautiful day.

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